


# The Quill



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# The Quill

STUDENT LITERARY MAGAZINE

QUEENS COLLEGE

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

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# Human Nature and The Soul

MAE MCCLURE

Folks down my way keep their noses pretty well to the grindstones. But the people up in Clear Creek are happier than June bugs the whole year round. It is said that the reason they are so happy is that they believe a sure-fire way to guarantee happiness in heaven is to be happy on earth. These people say they know that Alonso is bound to be happy wherever he's at; but, when it comes to Jed, they just shake their heads and say, "Well, I don't rightly know."

Now Jed and Alonso Judson were two brothers as different as the North and South Poles. Jed was the richest and the most miserable man in Clear Creek. True, his poultry won first prize at the State Fair; his rolling pastures looked like a picture from Country Gentleman, and his crops were the dream of every prosperous farmer. Yet Jed lived in the fear that his chickens would die of cholera, that his pigs would fall off from over-exertion, and that his horses would all kick out at one time. On sunny days he thought of hail storms and early frosts; on rainy days he thought of droughts and famines. Looking over his crops made him ill because they made him see potatoes with blights, cotton with boll weevils, and corn with borers. And his barns and silos struck terror to his soul, for he knew that a tornado was bound to strike soon. Indeed, his brother Alonso said that Jed wouldn't know how to be happy even in paradise.

With Alonso, though, it was altogether different. Every year his crops got smaller and his family grew larger. Deals and trades were nothing but money thrown to the winds. If he bought a rabbit, his children made a pet of it and refused to let it be eaten. It then multiplied until there was a whole pen of rabbits; and they all lived forever. On the other hand, if he bought a mule, it died of rickets the next day. If Alonso traded an egg-sucking dog for a hunting dog, he got a gun shy hound and an egg sucker too. Out of every batch of biddies he bought, seventy per cent of them were roosters, and out of every ten calves born on his place, eight of them were bull calves. Yet as scarce as plow hands were every baby born in his own family was always just another girl.

But in spite of the fact that he was reported to be the unluckiest man

alive, he was also believed to be the happiest. He chuckled when his hens stopped laying, grinned when his wife nagged him, and fought back a laugh when his cow broke loose and ate up his garden. While this attitude appeared to be contrary to human nature, it made life endurable for him and lightened the burdens of his neighbors, for it seemed that every one in Clear Creek with the exception of Jed had had his share of trouble, and hearing of another's troubles made the neighbors howl with laughter and forget their own.

Unfortunately, Alonso was not a religious man. Instead, he frequently upset his church-going friends by failing to observe the Sabbath. And when his neighbors passed by him on their way to church, it was not an uncommon sight to see him out plowing, whistling and clucking to his mule. He was also not above accepting a free drink now and then. Furthermore, he occasionally engaged in a card game or two—a non-profit game, of course.

These bad traits greatly alarmed Jed. Considering wealth to be evil, he was not greatly concerned about his brother's economic status; he was worried about the destination of Alonso's soul. He, therefore, paid many visits to Alonso's shack, each time quoting scripture passages and hinting of his own pious example. When these private visits proved fruitless, Jed brought along the Preacher who had once made a horse swop with Alonso, somewhat on the shady side.. Together the two men wrestled to pull Alonso's soul from the devil. They told him of the blessed peace that comes from walking the right road, and they told him of the devil's deadly clutches. But Alonso just grinned and winked at the Preacher and said that he reckoned that the Old Boy wasn't so bad, though he did do business like somebody else he knew.

There appeared before Jed one bright and sunny day a stranger—a stranger dressed in shiny white apparel who spoke in a voice as soft as cream and as sweet as honey. Jed recognized him at once and immediately began to worry. He saw his fence posts rot from age and his garden taken over by Johnson grass. The stranger, however, beckoned him on, and Jed followed, but not without many a backward look.

And on the self-same day near sundown there appeared also unto Alonso a visitor—a visitor with considerably different characteristics. The visitor, clad in high topped boots and a flowing black cape, smiled suavely. But for once in his life, Alonso did not return a smile. Instead, he began to dicker with his visitor.

"I ain't a mite a good to your master. Now you take Old Judge Billuns down the road apiece; he's as ornary a cuss as ever lived and a heap sight stronger than me. He'd do the devil credit any day."

"Ah, well, we're not a closed group. Wouldn't have taken in Hitler and Mussolini if we were. True, though, we'd rather have people like your brother."



"But you folks done had me all my life, and you ain't done right by me. My way of thinking is that I ought to go free."

"Oh, you'll go free in a land much bigger than this land, even if it is more fully populated."

The suave smile had turned into an indulgent one. Panic-stricken, Alonso tried other tactics. He told of his poor wife who already resembled a celery stalk, and painted a pitiful picture of how she would look after three years without him. Then he told of his nine girls who were still nothing but babies. His story was so moving that he himself shed tears. But the stranger merely smiled more broadly and said that at the rate the family seemed to be going, he thought before long a permanent visit between father and family could be arranged. Now it was bad enough to have to worry about his own soul without worrying about his family's. Alonso grew madder than one of his own bulls. Stamping and snorting, he shook his fists in the face of his visitor, who only laughed and said, "Bravo, now you're really in my hands." And with this, he whisked Alonso off to a land not too distant from the world planet.

Meanwhile, Jed was trying to settle down in a land twofold better than the one he left, and his difficulties were four fold. He thought he detected a faint trace of laryngitis in the singing voices and a broken string or two in the musical instruments. Sunshine all day, he believed, was a bad omen. The peaceful harmony that existed, furthermore, was a sure sign that it was time for another war. Indeed, Gabriel was at his wit's end and wondered if there had not been a slip-up somewhere down the line.

Things in the deep downstairs were even more uncomfortable. In fact, Alonso said that he thought that the North Carolina sun was hot, but now he knew that it was just a burning match compared to a forest fire. And somehow he just had to admire the devil. Alonso, set about making friends with his fellow-inmates. And before you could shake a leg, the very walls were resounding with Alonso's laughter, for he was indeed happy to make new friends as well as to see some of his old cronies that he had long ago forgotten. It was too much for Satan, and shouted some language to Beelzebub that sounded like the Westminster Catechism in reverse. But Beelzebub merely shrugged his shoulders and sighed.

A contact between Gabriel and Beelzebub was eventually made. The object of the call was to check on the heritage of the two men. Beelzebub agreed at once that Jed belonged below, and he thought that perhaps Alonso belonged upstairs. Satan's nudges became more vigorous, and Beelzebub declared he knew that Alonso belonged above. Gabriel said he didn't know, but he guessed it would be all right to try an exchange.

When the matter was brought before Alonso, Alonso was quite happy

over the whole deal and proved it by going around and shaking hands with Satan's council. Jed, on the other hand, was not as jubilant, but he took it in stride. "Well," said he, "it's no more than I been expecting."

It was said as Jed made his way to the elevator that there was actually a glint of happiness in his eyes. Some said it was due to the fact that in his new abode he thought he would find sympathy that he had never found before. Others believed it was because he thought he was getting his just reward. But the way it was told to me was that Jed was happy for the first time in his life because he knew that things couldn't get worse.



## Sonnet To Spring

LOUISE E. WHITE

The long thin fingers of a winter rain  
Are not the same bright messengers of spring  
That to the barelimbed waiting willows bring  
The feel of warm, damp, fragrant earth again.

The steely streaks from heaven's darkened plain  
Cut quickly through the icy air, and fling  
Themselves upon cold trees, who, cloakless, cling  
Their branches close, like ghosts in Night's terrain.

Gaunt winter waits for spring as death for birth  
Sighs, waiting, motionless, and strangely still.

But heaven's tears that mourn for lifeless earth  
Fall not unheeded. High atop a hill  
Of shadow, shy Spring looses her sweet mirth,  
And treetops, kissed, blush green with trembling thrill.

# The Aims of a Young Writer

FRANCES MCPHERSON

Critics may see in the young writer's work a zeal for reform or a desire for recognition and mercenary compensation, but the author usually has a fresher motive: the desire to create. Perhaps he has found in his emotions an intensity that moves him to write poetry. Perhaps, as myriad ideas confront him, he tries to understand and relate himself and his surroundings to them. Perhaps he derives a mischievous pleasure from expounding upon the philosophical implications of Mrs. Finch's hat. Beware of disturbing the aspiring author at this point to question his motives. Brisk irony may be his response. He may even be strangely reluctant to deliver a dissertation on a subject that he does not understand. He may jerk his half-inscribed sheet from his typewriter and invite you to walk with him through the slums.

None of these attitudes are mere callowness. Like older writers he too is confronted with limited years of experience, a confused world, elusive wisps of imagination, the necessity of adjusting personal philosophy, and both traditional and new literary forms. These components he is trying to smelt to simple creation. A paradox! Through the multiplicity of numerators he seeks the common denominator. From the tangent he seeks the circle.

If the young writer is wise, he never allows imitation to hobble him. Nevertheless, he profits from walking back over another's path and marking the pitfalls into which that author fell. He may choose to make his approach romantic, realistic, naturalistic, or any combination thereof. Whatever general approach he makes, he remembers that creation requires originality and imagination. The author finds that investigation of the circle is implemented by the tangent.

To write effective romantic prose or poetry, he must have and appreciate elements of romanticism in his life. The realist and naturalist have, in this case, needs parallel with the need of the romantic. The young author does not, however, embark on a frantic quest for experience. Rather he seeks the breadth of inclusion that comes from the measured combination of experience, absorption, and interpretation. He investigates Jerusalem before going to the uttermost part of the earth.

What is true of the young author's approach is true of the development of



his technical abilities. He tries to develop a disciplined mind that accommodates a store of other men's thoughts and still has ample space for its own independent operation. By enlarging his vocabulary, writing constantly, revising carefully, and studying other writers' styles, the writer acquires technique. Now he can underscore his themes, enhance his characters, or translate emotions into words.

The writer knows that even understanding, defined approach, inclusiveness, and technical proficiency do not always constitute creation. He therefore tries to imbue his work with both universality and individuality. He heeds Sir Philip Sidney's admonition: Look in thy heart and write.



## Night Sounds

CAROL RAY STOCKNER

The night was perfect; myriads of stars twinkled from their lofty perch; the moon's first beams were peeping cautiously over the hilltop. The fireflies, trying to outdo the stars, winked on and off in the darkness like tiny neon lights. I lay on the rough concrete walk, feeling its warmth through my blouse. The stars had never shone so brightly, I thought sleepily. And never had the frogs and crickets gr-r-rumped and chirruped in such perfect harmony.

As I listened contentedly to the sounds of the night, I became aware of a louder and somewhat formidable drone. "An airplane!" I thought. "And flying mighty low for night-flying." The plane was directly over our house, I observed. I jumped up and peered anxiously through the dusky mist that the moon made out of the darkness. The plane was circling, and, as it came into view, I could easily see the lights blinking on and off. The plane again circled the clearing where our house and farm stood; this time it seemed nearer. As the plane circled for the third time, I heard the distinct sputter and cough of the engines. My eyes were glued to the ghostly silhouette of the plane against the sky. With each circle the plane drew nearer our house, engines still rapidly spouting guttural sounds from their depths.

The loud outcries of the plane's engines soon brought my family outside. Together we stood watching the plane for a few seconds. No one needed to be told that both the plane and our farm were in grave danger. The plane was

now so low that we could see the frantic movements of the pilot through the small windows. Then, all was quiet; the pilot had turned off his engines. My uncle yelled to him to try to make it to the orchard. The pilot seemed not to hear; so we all yelled together "The orchard!" Aunt Etta dashed into the house and rushed out carrying my uncle's powerful railroader's flashlight and two other ones. Uncle Bob waved the big flashlight toward the orchard and began to run in that direction. My aunt and I dashed madly after him, also waving our flashlights. The plane headed for the orchard, engines still spitting and wings jerking crazily from side to side. Frightened and inquiring neighbors began to gather around the orchard fence. Flashlights and lanterns, together with the now-risen moon, lit up the orchard almost as bright as daylight. The plane zoomed over the tops of the trees in a semicircle. The deafening crash against the trees could have been heard for miles. The engines gave a last sickening shudder. For a moment there was complete silence. Then cries of "Get the pilot!" "Get the pilot!" shattered the silence.

Men rushed to the plane which had smashed into the very top of a large old apple tree. Its massive, crooked branches had broken the fall. When we reached the wreckage, we found the pilot lying unconscious beneath the wing of his plane. He was quickly dragged out and put upon a stretcher. All the neighbors trooped back to the house, stretcher-bearers in the lead. Excited babbling broke out; and somewhere in the crowd I heard two little boys fussing over who had seen the crash first.



## Shadow

FRANCES MCPHERSON

Shadow on the grass  
Ahead . . . sun-thrown . . . moon-cast.  
Take care.  
To step within: immensity.  
To stay without: the color bounds.

# BOOK REVIEWS



Marchette Chute

## Shakespeare of London

MANON WILLIAMS

No one of his generation would be more amazed than William Shakespeare to discover that his works are now of interest primarily to scholars, according to Miss Chute. It would never have occurred to him that reluctant students might be compelled to study his plays as he was probably required to pore over Plautus, Terence and Ovid; nor that a magnificent—and forbidding—marble structure such as the Folger Library in Washington might be built for the sole purpose of housing Shakespearean collections.

Shakespeare, the living human being, and the times in which he lived are the subject of this absorbing book. He did not regard himself as a member of the literary upper crust, but preferred to remain a working member of a theatrical company, which brought him very little prestige but substantial monetary rewards. His plays were written to keep the repertoire of the Chamberlain's Company well filled with profitable offerings, and not with a view to gaining personal fame as an author.

That this was a matter of choice is clear, because, while he achieved enormous success on his one venture into the field of "reputable" literature, he returned to the theater as soon as the opportunity presented itself. From 1592 to 1594 the theaters were closed because of the Great Plague, and during this period Shakespeare wrote *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. But when the theaters reopened in 1594, he turned his back forever on narrative poems, the Earl of Southampton, his patron, and the better-class Elizabethan reader, and thereafter devoted himself exclusively to the theater and its patron, the "penny public," "the ordinary London citizens who did not judge by Italian rules of the unities or French rules of diction or English rules of decorum but only by what they enjoyed." Thus Shakespeare survived the one great crisis of his writing career, and continued to create living characters rather than ornate phrases.

Miss Chute describes how the Elizabethan era gave Shakespeare the freedom which was essential to the development of his full powers. First, the freedom of language. Since Latin was the only subject considered worthwhile to teach in schools, English was allowed to flourish like weeds in an untended garden, free from the rules of the grammarian. In the hands of some lesser men, such freedom produced deplorable results. The genius of Shakespeare worked this pliant medium into some of the world's greatest poetry. Second, the freedom of the theater. Twenty years earlier, or twenty years later, he would have found a London theater catering to the nobility and the upper classes, who judged plays solely by artificial standards of fashion and good taste. But during the brief period—apparently two decades or a little more—of Shakespeare's career, the theater was supported by the unwashed multitudes of the city, who worked hard for their pennies, and who demanded in exchange for them only a good measure of entertainment.

Much of Shakespeare's life is well documented. The carefully preserved public records of both Stratford and London throw considerable light on such important occurrences as his marriage, his numerous real estate transactions, his lawsuits—a popular pastime among Elizabethan gentlemen—and the probate of his will. From such records it is possible to follow John Shakespeare as he moves to the town of Stratford, where he prospers, and his son William as he moves from the town to the city, where he, in turn, prospers.

In order to cut through the mass of tradition which has grown up around the legendary and heroic figure of Shakespeare, and to get back to the living, breathing man, the author has used only documents originating during his lifetime or that of men who knew him personally. It is fascinating to watch Miss Chute at her detective work, as she brings together scraps of information from numerous sources to prove one point after another. She gives the basis



for many of her findings, but not enough to make the book dull reading. The frequency with which she uses such qualifying terms as "probably" makes for confidence in the soundness of those conclusions which she states as fact.

This book is not a literary biography. It does not concern the part of Shakespeare that was immortal and for all time. It concerns only the part of him that was mortal and belonged to the Elizabethan age. His plays are not discussed as literature, but only as they relate to the working problems of the London stage. It is a highly entertaining account of the life and work of a likeable and talented man.



## Boswell's London Journal

MANON WILLIAMS

Samuel Johnson's shadow, it seems, had a life of his own. To most people James Boswell is known as the little man who constantly followed the great Doctor Johnson, taking notes on his actions and personality, and who wrote what Macaulay ranks as the first among biographies, *The Life of Johnson*.

In this masterly work with its wealth of detail and vivid portrayal of Johnson, Boswell showed that he had an exceptional genius of observation and talent for writing. With the subsequent publication of Boswell's papers and the journal of his trip with Johnson to the Hebrides, the idea of Boswell himself as an interesting figure of the eighteenth century came into being.

But the full worth of "Jamey" Boswell was not actually realized until his private papers were discovered. After an extended struggle (which is a story in itself), Lieutenant Colonel Ralph H. Isham of New York succeeded in purchasing the papers and then sold them to Yale University. Under the editorship of Frederick A. Pottle, Sterling Professor of English at Yale, the first of these private papers, *Boswell's London Journal*, has been printed by McGraw-Hill.



This journal is more than just a daily account of Boswell's year in London when he was twenty-two years old. It is his very personal record and was not intended primarily to be published. He sent the almost daily accounts of himself to a friend who kept the letters. As the journal progressed, however, he became so attached to it that he could not destroy it as he had once planned. He made the request that it should be published in the form of a journal some years after his death. But it was not published until 1950—and for good reason. Boswell's family did not approve of his being a writer and being in London in the first place, and in the second place he reveals in his journal parts of his life and personality of which they absolutely did not approve.

He had obtained the reluctant consent of his father to leave Scotland and live in London. His father wanted him to be a lawyer as he himself was. Boswell wanted a position in the Footguards so that he could remain in London. But behind this conflict there was still another, only half-realized by the young man himself, which manifested itself in an urgent literary gift and a passion for authorship.

This *London Journal* is the intimate record of the dual struggle—of son to assert his independence from father, and of literary genius to save itself from extinction. It is remarkable for its frankness and honesty, which is sometimes shocking, in recording the facts of the author's life, as well as for the shrewdness with which he dissects his own motives.

We see Boswell as he lives in the exciting London Society for nine momentous months. We are with him as he hears King George the Third speak in the House of Lords, as he views a cockfight, as he witnesses a public execution and as he pursues the lovely Louisa. We are with him as he talks with David Garrick, Thomas Sheridan, and James MacPherson. We are with him as he meets the famous Doctor Johnson.

The *Journal* may be compared with the *Diary* of Pepys and the *Confessions* of Rousseau. It has points of likeness to each. Yet, Boswell may emerge as the greatest of the three, for he does not set down uninspired matters of fact as Pepys often does; nor in his frankness and honesty, does the reader detect, as in Rousseau, any purpose to shock, any sense that the author was avowedly writing with History and Fame peering over his shoulder. In the light of all the new evidence, it seems certain that Boswell's place in English literature will have to be reappraised, and that the biographer of Samuel Johnson will emerge as a figure far greater than most people have supposed him to be.



# The Philosophy of a Student

FLORENCE ASHCRAFT

My primary purpose in becoming a student in an institution of higher learning was at first pragmatic. The object was a diploma and a certificate to teach Bible in high school. Education was merely a preparation for life. Such shallow reasoning, however, was destined for a revolutionary change. During the past three years there has been dawning upon my feeble brain the fact that education is not just a preparation for life work. It is not a four-year period cut from the pie of life, swallowed whole, and forgotten. It is four years of living. An intelligent person would say that statement is obvious, but a college student who spends nearly all his time in study sometimes begins to wonder if he is really alive. If I have learned nothing else in college, I have learned to live in the present. My pragmatism has undergone a change, indeed.

I have realized that these are the years when a student's life is either transformed or deformed. These are the years of fast maturing. Somewhere between the freshman and senior years the student becomes an adult. Entire new worlds are opened in such heretofore unknown fields of study as philosophy, psychology, classics, and great literature. A whole universe of knowledge stretches out in a stirring challenge: "Come and know me!" This is the cry of education.

Within my philosophy must come certain present relationships: my relationship to my teachers, to my studies, and to my fellow students. My attitude toward teachers in general may be one which is rarely found among students, except those who are going into the teaching profession themselves. I agree with one of my teachers who said, "A cat leads a cat's life; a mouse leads a mouse's life; a dog leads a dog's life; and a teacher leads a dog's life." No other class of people is so mistreated as are teachers. They are criticized most severely and most unjustly. The average student's pet peeve is his teacher. My opinion is that students cause nine-tenths of the troubles between their teachers and themselves. I submit that there are teachers who are not qualified to teach, but in my experience they have been few. Their difficult assignment is to teach unwilling students. Yes, even many college students are unwilling to learn. And the poor teachers receive the blame when the student fails. Why can't we enter the classroom of a new teacher with a mind free from the prejudices of another student, who possibly had that teacher the

year before? If the teacher is an ogre, I want to find it out for myself. But I cannot help thinking that teachers are human beings. If they are not, I wonder what kind of animal I will be transformed into before I start teachings.

A discussion of teachers brings us to their teachings. And it is at this point that I shall explode. Why, why, why do people call themselves students and never study? I just cannot understand the purpose in someone's coming to college and wasting four years and their father's money in grumbling about studying and never actually studying. Though college is a maturing agent and a broadening influence, so are other fields of life. Students who do not want to study should go to work and stop taking up valuable time and space in a college where the purpose is to learn. After all, study will not kill us. In spite of the grumbling about study schedules, I advocate them. Organization is half the work. I have found that it is possible, even with a very heavy schedule, to study systematically and steadily all day, and still get to bed at ten o'clock every night. And even have time for extra-curricular activities and dates (if I could get them!) It's certainly worth a try for the students who have been pulling their hair in desperation. My philosophy is to do the best I can. If the best I can do still does not complete the work that is assigned to me (but it always will), I refuse to worry: twenty years from now I shall never know the difference.

Second only to studying in college is the forming of friendships. The friends made in college are usually lasting ones, and friends are priceless. College students have a great many conflicts. They must face vocational, religious, and emotional decisions. Few people realize the devastating conflicts that confuse college students. Their new knowledge causes doubts to arise; they change some of their ideas and think they have to change all of them. They cast aside many of their convictions and standards. They need someone close to their age and to their problems to help them. The answer is that they have to help one another. We who are students need to learn wise counsel and sympathetic understanding. As far as I am concerned, I would give up hours of study time to draw a person nearer to Christ if I could. To me a human soul is more valuable than a day's work, and that comes even before studies. The heart of the matter is that people need a purpose in life and a power to carry out that purpose, or life will become a phantom. My own life has a purpose: to serve God by serving my fellow-man. Therefore, my life is a happy one, and I want those around me to find that happiness, too. It is said that character develops itself in the stream of life; so in the stream of college life one student can be an influence for God in the lives of others.

Such is my philosophy as a student. The word, philosophy, comes from two Greek words, "philos" and "sophos", meaning "the love of wisdom". I

want to attain wisdom to learn, wisdom to get along with people, and wisdom to meet life's problems. Though my ideas have been somewhat changed during these three years of college, my philosophy as a student is my philosophy of life. It is a simple one, one which answers the soul's most important questions: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? I came, originally from God; I am here to serve God; when His task for me is done, I am going back to God.



## Eve

FRANCES MCPHERSON

Night comes conceiving dreams,  
Is still that you may go to her.  
She shows the spearpoint grass, the steady stars  
That do not lend it gray or green.  
You fear the star that winks in Thalesia well?  
You seek a day-born dream?  
Day-born dreams, fear-shaped, are stained by blood.  
Death rots them.  
Earth is not lit by stars until the sun removes.  
The stars revolve, each facet glancing.  
Night, I come.



# Exposition of the Primitive

HELEN DRENNEN

Some forms of life seem to escape entirely the changes wrought by the evolution of biology, society, and world events. This is true not only of some species of plants and animals but also of human beings. I know just such a person. His name is Joe Smith, and he is as simple and unaffected as that name. Returning from a short summer conference two summers ago, I was instructed to go out to the long row of rose bushes and speak to Joe. And when I did, I saw that the hot summer sun was scarcely more bright than the smile on his shining black face as he turned to me and said, "So this heah is the lady's little gal. I'se gwine to be yo' yard man frum now onward. Your maw like mah work jest fine, she say."

From that day on Joe Smith began to win his way into the heart of every member of our family. We changed only one thing about him. The little boy next door saw him one day, exclaimed, "Mama, that's Uncle Remus in Helen's yard," and Joe Smith became Uncle Remus at that moment. Indeed, when he came, rain or shine, every week our house and yard were given the air of a plantation. Uncle Remus bowed and smiled at my mother any time she happened to pass him, he stood in great awe of my stately grandmother, and he always treated me with indulgent courtesy. My Yankee father never accustomed himself to being greeted with, "Afternoon, marser", but Daddy always came in smiling on those afternoons when he had talked to Uncle Remus. Even our pet cocker spaniel was an object of Uncle Remus's consideration; many times we could hear him call sharply to the little boys on the street, saying, "Don' throw them rocks in heah! Yo air gwine to hit Miss Helen's dawg fo' sure, and she gwine to be upsot. Git away with ye!"

Uncle Remus was, above all, an individual; and his habits were amusing, irritating, and pathetic. He would take orders from no one except my mother, and her tone and quality of speech must have been quite distinctive. Any other person directing his work would find him almost totally deaf. The most perfect picture of irate dignity and calculated innocence our family ever witnessed was of my grandmother trying to make clear to Uncle Remus that she wanted the chopped wood in her garage and not in our basement. A second habit of his caused us quite a bit of research. Uncle Remus consistently left the grass sling in the garage, and Mother always took it to him. But it was



left just where she put it each time. Finally, after questioning Uncle Remus about the condition of the yard tools and being assured everything was "jest fine," Mother suggested that Daddy have the sling blade sharpened. Still, the sling remained propped against the garage door; nevertheless, the long weeds which grow particularly rapidly in the summer were never left standing. Daddy came in to report the next time the lawn was mowed that Uncle Remus was down on his hands and knees cutting the tough weeds with a pocketknife! It was a delicate matter; Mother was delegated in view of her favored position in Uncle Remus's eyes to go out and offer him the sling. He listened calmly to her recommendations and offer and then, shaking his woolly head, "Lowed as how he'd use his knife." To this day the sling has had nothing to dull its blade except the passing of time.

The third habit led us to investigate Uncle Remus's origin and home surroundings. At first no amount of persuasion would induce him to eat his noon-day meal in our kitchen. At Mother's call he would go to the basement and wash his hands and stand patiently on the back steps until his dinner was handed to him. For three such meals he continued in the middle of eating his dinner to ask for a paper napkin. Knowing that Negroes usually prefer the flap of their coats or their handkerchiefs to napkins, Mother expressed her curiosity to me. One day, however, we saw him carefully wrapping up over half of his dinner and storing it away in a tremendous pocket in his coat. This, too, was a delicate matter; Mother knew that he had not had enough to eat and she wondered if other things might not find their way into those cavernous pockets. She asked him that time and the time following if he had had enough to eat. He always smiled and nodded his head. On an impulse one day he exclaimed that his wife thought my mother a marvelous cook, just as he did himself. Mother inquired politely how Mary knew what kind of a cook Mother was. "I allus takes her somethin' of what yo gives me," Uncle Remus replied somewhat in confusion. Mother asked him if that was why he never ate in the kitchen. "Yessum. Thet an' cause I don' want to be no trouble." Mother gave him a lecture on nourishment and gave him something to take home to Mary each time. He consented to eat in the kitchen on extremely hot or cold days; and when Mother was out of the room, he would wink broadly at me and slip a cookie or a piece of cheese into his pocket "fer mah Mary." The days that Mother had a ham bone or some other leftover to send to Mary I thought the watery, sparkling eyes would roll so far back in Uncle Remus's head that they would never focus again. Uncle Remus supported Mary solely on his yard money, and he left our door each week with profuse thanks far excelling the worth of any of these supplements to his wages.

Uncle Remus stoutly avoided revealing his age until the day I cooked

lunch for him. But that day he was so overcome with the fact that I could cook "lik yo maw" that he carried on quite an extended monologue while I washed the lunch dishes. He was to be seventy-eight if the good Lord let him live until November (and he saw seventy-eight this month). He was born in the country. His childhood had been a happy one, and he took great pride in the fact that he had learned bricklaying, carpentry, and cabinet-making. More than that he had learned to walk great distances. Then we understood why he always refused bus fare and why he was so gleeful when he was offered odd pieces of furniture in the basement.

The long periods during which I was away worried Uncle Remus. When he learned that I went to school away from home he was thunderstruck. He asked me a million questions, and he exclaimed incessantly over my confirmation that I liked school. He sagely concluded any favorable remarks I made about school with, "Things sho' has changed. Ah reckons teachers has too."

As far as we know, Uncle Remus has yet made only two concessions to modern times. He likes Coca-Colas, and he still considers them even better than the plug of tobacco that he buys first out of his wages. He does not like cars, however; but he considers them quite a wonder. "They sho' does go fast" is all he says when it rains so hard that Mother will not let him go home on foot.

Uncle Remus is a prevailing picture of the primitive slave of his race. He is also an example of faithfulness and thoroughness in his work. Religion, some people say, is instinctive in a particular way to a Negro. Perhaps it is. But to Uncle Remus it is both instinctive and positive. In my mind's eye I will always see him folding gnarled, black hands and saying grace before a meal. The warm smile and glowing expression are there in that scene and in the one in his own house where we came late one evening and found him reading the Bible to Mary. Joe Smith knows by his life and shows in his actions that it is his "good Lawd" that has blessed him and let him live to see his seventy-eighth year.



# We All March Forward Together

MANON WILLIAMS

We were all glad when they finally finished the new highway right through town from one city limit to the other. To the people of the town the old street had been an eyesore—rough and narrow—and we didn't like being recognized by strangers from all over the state as residents of "that town with the horrible street." But it was even worse during the months they were working on the job. We had put up with a lot, and it was fine to have the brand-new street opened.

The editorial in the daily paper expressed our feelings:

"The City can look back on this day with satisfaction and pride. The completion of our magnificent super highway is one more milestone in the March of Progress of this fast-growing commercial and industrial center.

"Progress does not come about easily nor painlessly. It must be fought for, and it inevitably causes some inconvenience. But we must all recognize that, as in any human endeavor, the fortunes and well-being of each of us is necessarily bound up in the fortune and well-being of the community. Each citizen will, in the months and years to come, have a share in the greater prosperity that will be ours as a result of our progressive action."

Of course there were some who weren't happy over the way things had been handled. Before the work was begun the city had bought a ten-foot strip from every owner along Beverly Avenue, but as you would expect, the construction workers ran over a little bit here and there.

Mrs. Gladys Livermore was one of those who suffered. She has a nice home on Beverly over toward the east edge of town, and she takes a great deal of pride in her lawn. It had always been one of the neatest and prettiest in town, with its bright green grass closely trimmed and its border of flowers and shrubs. She was mad anyway at having the city take even ten feet of her well-balanced lawn, and when the bulldozer ripped out a little more, and left a raw, red bank, with a few loose chunks of sod hanging over the rim, she blew up. She let the whole town know about it, too.

Mayor Kendrick knew how she had suffered. He heard her troubles at least fifty times. It got so bad that he finally told his secretary he was always out when the telephone rang, until she found out who was calling. He tried



to persuade his wife to protect him the same way, but that didn't work out so well. After Mrs. Kendrick had to listen to the story several times, she refused to cooperate. The Mayor almost quit going to church; and when he did go, he was careful to see where Mrs. Livermore was sitting. As soon as the service was over, he fought his way out of the farthest door, not being too careful where his elbows gouged.

But Mr. Kendrick couldn't always avoid hearing about Mrs. Livermore's grief. He had to hear it from her husband. The Mayor handled the insurance on Mr. Livermore's big warehouse and his fleet of trucks, and he couldn't risk making such a good customer mad.

So it was that the Mayor said to Mr. Blackwell, the City Attorney, who was handling the complaints, "For God's sake, do something to get that woman off my neck. She's about to run me crazy. What do you think she will settle for?"

"She's already turned down the hundred and fifty dollars you told me to offer her. That's about five times what it will take to repair her damages. She says she will sue us if we don't give her a thousand."

"No, no, we can't have that," said the Mayor, "we'll have to settle it out of court, but make it as light on us as you can. The Livermores are influential people, and, after all, we did do a lot of damage to that beautiful lawn of hers. It's only right for the city to pay for what it has done. It's not fair to ask private citizens to pay for our progress. I'm authorizing you to settle with her for any reasonable amount. Use your own judgment, but be sure that she is satisfied. It would be awfully bad publicity to have some of our best citizens suing the city. We will be entirely justified in giving her a little more than it's worth, just to keep things running smoothly."

Mrs. Livermore was satisfied when the city paid her a hundred dollars and built a stone retaining wall along the front of her lot.

Then there was old Roland Simms, who has a furniture store on Beverly, up in the business section. When the old pavement was being torn up, the construction gang must have cracked a storm sewer, because the basement of Simms' store was flooded a dozen times or more while the work was going on. The first time it happened, a lot of rugs and furniture got wet. After that, he took care to have anything that could be damaged stored somewhere else, but his feelings were hurt all over again every time.

It looked as if he lived for no other purpose than to find some fresh evidence of the city's carelessness—I know he hurried down to the store early in the morning after a rain—and if he found any water in the basement, he would dash to the 'phone and call Mr. Robinson, his lawyer.

Old Simms wasn't too well thought of in town, and being a Republican didn't help his standing at the City Hall. The Mayor didn't like him a bit,

and would have been glad to make him squirm. But his lawyer was something else.

Samuel S. Robinson is the best lawyer in the county. His fees are high, but most people who hire him are glad afterwards that they did. The way he can win law suits is amazing. When he gets on his feet and starts to talk, a jury seems to forget that the judge and the other lawyers have anything to do with the case.

Mr. Blackwell shuddered to think what might happen if Mr. Robinson had an opportunity to talk about the tremendous damages his client had suffered. "He really has an awfully good case, you know," he said to the Mayor, "and you can bet there won't be any city taxpayers on the jury when he gets through objecting to them. No doubt he has set an inflated value on the property that was damaged, but we are not in a position to prove it. There's no telling how much the jury might give him."

"That might be true enough," replied the Mayor, "but I don't intend to stand by and see him make a big killing off the city. I would be the last man in the world to object to a fair and reasonable settlement, but that old skinflint is just being nasty. He's trying to see how much he can gouge us for—out of pure spite."

Most of the members of the City Council shared Mr. Blackwell's respect for Mr. Robinson, and after some heated discussion they persuaded the Mayor to accept the lawyer's advice. The city settled with old Simms on pretty much his own terms. And so Mr. Simms and Mr. Robinson were both satisfied.

Mr. Simms still tells anyone who will listen how he was cheated by the city, but when he is alone in his drab little office, he frequently grins to himself, thinking about the good one he put over on that stuffy Kendrick.

Little old Mrs. Underwood was also disturbed by the work on the new highway. She lives in an old frame house just west of the business section. As a matter of fact businesses are already springing up around her small lot. The house looks a trifle dilapidated, with the brown paint scaling off in a number of places, but you can hardly blame Mrs. Underwood. When her husband died some twenty years ago, he left her the house and very little else. She lives on her old age pension, supplemented occasionally by the gift of a few dollars from her son, Harry. Harry really should help her more, but most of his earnings—when he has a job—go to buy whiskey.

The new highway took almost all of Mrs. Underwood's tiny front yard. And the bulldozer came so close to her porch that it accidentally tore out her three wooden steps. She wasn't greatly upset by the damage at first, but some of her friends told her she would be foolish not to make the city pay.

"Yes, indeed, Mrs. Underwood, I'd sure make them pay if they had done



this to me," said Mrs. Johnson, one of the members of her Sunday School class, who take turns calling on Mrs. Underwood once a month, "Why, I hear they are giving some people two or three hundred dollars when they didn't do anything but knock over a tree or something like that. I don't know anyone who had a part of their house torn off."

"My! I certainly could use a little extra money now," said Mrs. Underwood, "I'll have to have those steps fixed of course, and if they would pay me a hundred dollars there's a lot of things I could do around the house. You know," she added wistfully, "I ain't had a new hat in four years."

When the assistant city clerk, Earl Crocker, came to see her, he was polite in an official sort of way. "I'm sorry, ma'am, but we can't pay you anything like that. If we gave everybody what they asked for, the city would be broke. Now, of course, if you don't think you are getting a square deal you can go to court. But I can tell you right now what the judge would say; he'd say that ten dollars is more than enough to fix up those steps."

"Oh, I wouldn't think of going into court," said Mrs. Underwood, "I don't want to cause any trouble, and I'm sure you know what is right. But I just thought . . ."

"Then I suggest you sign this release. I have a lot of people to see today. That's right, sign right here."

Mrs. Underwood hasn't had her steps repaired yet, but the piece of heavy timber she dragged around from the back yard serves very well, though it does make quite a long step down from the porch.

There may be a few of our citizens who still are not happy over the new highway, but most of us agree with the Mayor. As he told us in his speech at the opening-day ceremony, "Progress and prosperity are community matters. What benefits one of us will benefit all of us. As our fine city grows and develops, all of us will share in our glorious future. If we are to advance at all, we must all march forward together."

# The Coupons

BY MURPHY ALEXANDER

It was all on account a' them coupons. Soap coupons they wuz. Meg wuz gettin' um from the cook up at the big house and Ma didn't like it a' tall. Ma didn't understand Meg so good anyways. She didn't b'lieve in nothing but work, but then she wuz raised to it. Ya' couldn't blame her none fer that. Spec'ly since Pa Pickett died and left all the farm managin' to Ma an' the boys, she worked harder 'n ever. It wuz after Pa died that Ma asked me to come over and lend a' hand with the plowin'. I noticed right off that Meg wuz diff'rent from Ma.

Meg wuz a pale lookin' young'un, sorta big-eyed and stringy-headed. She liked purty things and use' ta make b'lieve all the time. She wuz a soft-hearted kid, too. I r'member how she used t' cry when the animals got hurt, and how she would beg the boys not to whip the mules to make 'em plow straight. She loved to laugh too. Sometimes she'd git so happy she'd just bust out in smiles, and her laugh would be like the brook water bubblin' on them rocks. Meg wuz a swell kid. Yes sir, she wuz nice to have round. That is, she used t' be 'fore that awful fuss she and Ma had. I 'member that day jest like yistiddy.

Ma wuz standin' over the stove and the fire wuz blazin' up. She wuz screamin' at Meg like thunder, and Meg wuz jist a' tremblin' something awful. Seem like I could see her little heart thumpin' like it would jist break in two. Yes sir, that's how it wuz. It all started with Meg collectin' them coupons.

I 'member hearin' Ma fussin' at Meg one day 'fore that.

"Meg," she wuz sayin', "I tole ya' bout goin' up to the big house after them silly coupons. I ain't gonna tell ya' no more. I'm gonna git the stick to ya next time, you hear me?" Ma sounded mad.

"Yes'm," Meg said real low. She didn't keer how Ma went on. She had ten more coupons t' add to her collection! The cook up at the big house saved 'em for her every wash day. Soon Meg would have a' nough coupons to order her doll. It wuz a beautiful doll with real hair and eyes that opened and shut jist like a real person. That doll meant a whole lot to Meg. That's why she disobeyed Ma 'bout goin' to the big house.

After that day I didn't hear a' Ma ketchin' Meg agin. But Meg had that doll on 'er mind all right. She'd come out and talk t' me 'bout it, and her eyes

would beam like sunshine. 'Course she couldn't talk t' Ma 'bout it; Ma didn't understand. But Meg would come talk to me. I kin see her now perched up on the fence and tellin' me how she'd dreamed 'bout the Princess. The Princess wuz what she wuz gonna call her fer short; Princess Virginia would be her real name, like Miss Jenny up at the big house. Meg would sit up there and talk about the Princess, and I could see her eyes shinin' like mornin' dew. I'd keep watchin' her while I wuz feedin' the mules, 'cause I wuz a'feared she'd fall off the fence and git hurt. She wuz sech a little thing, and she'd git excited when she talked. Then sometime when I wuz plowin', Meg would slip away from helpin' Ma with the washin' and come follow 'long and talk to me 'bout the Princess some more. Yes sir, Meg was mighty happy 'bout the Princess. It wuz purty near all she thought 'bout in them days—jist the Princess and the soap coupons.

The Princess wuz a help to Meg too. Ma made Meg work right hard. I could see Meg 'most any day staggerin' under a load of clothes t' hang out or standin' over a hot stove helpin' Ma with the cooking. That's when Meg would dream 'bout the Princess. She would pretend she wuz cookin' Princess Jenny a fine dinner or hangin' out her purty silk dresses 'stead of our ole work shirts. Meg tole me 'bout her pretendin' and how it made the work easier. But still it seemed like to me it wuz right hard on sech a little pale young'un.

While they wuz doin' the housework Ma would lecture t' Meg 'bout goin' t' the big house. Ma hadn't ketched her agin, but she kinda felt like Meg wuz still goin' up there. The big house wuz where Miss Jenny and Mr. Ted lived. Ma wuz a'feared Meg would pester the folks and she got mighty mad at Meg for goin' there. But I couldn't blame Meg none for goin'. It wuz sech a purty place—all green and cool and quiet like. Ma didn't understand, though, and she got plenty mad.

One day Ma ketched Meg agin and she scared her bad.

"Meg," she said, "if I ketch you goin' up there agin, I'm gonna take them coupons you been gitten' and throw 'em right in the fire! You hear me?"

Meg heard all right. Her eyes jist flooded up with tears, but she didn't cry. She couldn't let Ma see how much she keered.

"Yes, Ma," wuz all she could say; she knowed she'd go back agin. Cook would have ten more coupons ready next wash day. After that Meg wuz real keerful how she went to the big house. But she went all right! The coupons wuz mountin' up and Meg seemed t' git happier and happier everyday. Soon she would have the real Princess for her very own; she wouldn't have t' make b'lieve anymore.

Then it happened. Ma ketched Meg agin. It wuz jist when I wuz on my way to feed the dogs and I stopped to watch what Ma'd do. Meg wuz kinda



fadin' in the door hopin' Ma wouldn't git her. But Ma did git her. Her eyes lighted on them coupons like a chicken hawk on a biddie. She wuz mad all right! But she didn't say nothin'. Meg give one look at Ma and started tremblin' so she couldn't hardly git up to her room. Soon as she got up the steps, Ma lit out after her. Meg wuz countin' up her coupons when Ma got her.

"Meg! You gimme them silly things! I done tole ya 'bout them coupons. Give 'em here to me like I tell you!"

Meg hadn't never disobeyed Ma, but now it looked like she wuz gonna do it.

"Please, Ma,"—she said real weak-like, "please lemme keep 'em. I'm gonna git me a beautiful doll, Ma. A real lady doll like Miss Jenny. Ma, please lemme keep 'em——. Don't take 'em Ma; don't take 'em."

But Ma wuz mad as a blowed up toad frog. Grabbing Meg by the wrist, she got them coupons outa her hand and stormed down the steps and headed for the stove. Meg followed right behind cryin' so sorrowful that anybody's heart woulda broke. That is anybody's heart 'ceptin' Ma's. Ma wuz determined, and she wuz mad!

"Ma——Ma——don't burn 'em up, Ma." Meg's words were spoke 'tween sobs over and over again. "Ma——Ma——Ma!" Meg wuz a' wailin' now.

But couldn't nothing stop Ma. She lifted up the stove lid and throwed in the coupons. Meg's scream near 'bout shook the windows loose. She run toward the stove where the fire wuz a' blazin' up. I come in that door in a hurry. Wuz that poor young'un gonna reach in that stove after them coupons? But Ma wuz on the lookout. She stood right there till the fire went down. The room got dead quiet. Meg wasn't cryin' no more. She jist stood there a tremblin' and staring into the stove. There wuz the coupons—nothing but ashes; there wuz the Princess, Meg's beautiful Princess—dead; there wuz Meg's dreams—all gone. I ain't never seed anything so awful! I knowed Meg's poor little heart wuz broke clear in two. Ma even looked kinda scared now after what she'd done. Meg didn't hear a thing we said to her, and Ma fin'lly took 'er by the hand and led 'er upstairs.

After that day things wuzn't the same. Meg didn't git no better. I missed her laughin' and talkin' to me. 'Course she helped Ma with the cookin' and washin' same as usual. She'd even come set on the fence to watch me work. But she wuzn't like she used t' be. She didn't laugh no more. Her eyes wuz big an' round an' sad. Ma got so she'd take time to be nice to Meg best she knowed how. But Meg jist didn't git no better off. It made me awful sad seein' Meg that a'way. I started savin' up right then, but I don't make much ya' know. I ain't got quite a'nough yit, but I'm a' savin' to buy Meg that Princess. Ma didn't see why Meg keered so much. Ma didn't understand Meg so good.





